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This study shows that the desire of faculty members to participate in administrative decision making varies with their field of specialization, sex, and years of educational experience. The field of specialization seems to have the most effect, academic instructors generally wanting a higher degree of participation than the teachers of vocational or technical subjects. Among the academic faculty, the men advocate more involvement than the women; among the applied faculty, the reverse is true. As the level of education of the faculty member increases, so does his interest in administrative decisions, those with advanced degrees being better trained for such participation and more knowledgeable about the problems of an educational institution. Administrators should encourage the applied faculty to take more interest, if not in institutional decision making, at least in such other faculty activities as council and committee work. Since every faculty member can and should contribute to the development of an institution in his own way, it is up to the administrator to make it possible for him to do so. (HH)

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DECISION-MAKING
IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

Joseph A. Malik

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by

Joseph A. Malik

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DECISION-MAKING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A Study of Faculty Participation

by

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DECISION-MAKING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

--An Overview--

Nature of the Study

This study is an analysis of faculty participation in decision-making as viewed by academic faculty members, applied faculty members (technical-vocational faculty), and administrators in Oregon community colleges. The purpose of the study was to determine whether there were significant differences among the categories of respondents on existing patterns of participation and desired patterns of participation. A questionnaire--designed to measure perceptions of faculty participation in decision-making, field tested at Lane Community College in the spring of 1967, and distributed to all nine community colleges in Oregon--provided the data for the study. Significant differences among the categories of respondents were tested by the Mann-Whitney U Test.

Findings and Conclusions

Existing Patterns of Participation. The findings indicated that academic faculty members generally perceived more faculty participation in decision-making than applied faculty members. The academic faculty members disagreed most with the applied faculty members on decisions pertaining to curriculum and instruction. Administrators generally perceived greater faculty involvement than did the academic faculty members. The data revealed more disagreement and differences of greater magnitude between administrators and applied faculty members than between administrators and academic faculty members. Administrators

generally perceived considerably more faculty participation than did applied faculty members. Perceptions of faculty participation in decision-making varied by years of experience in education. Faculty members with 16 or more years of experience perceived the most participation; those with from four to nine years of experience perceived the least participation. Faculty members with less than a bachelor's degree perceived more faculty participation than those with bachelor's or advanced degrees.

Desired Patterns of Participation. When views of desired patterns of faculty participation were examined, the findings differed considerably. Academic faculty members advocated much greater involvement than either the applied faculty members or the administrators. Applied faculty members and administrators advocated very similar patterns of faculty participation. Where differences did exist, administrators tended to favor more participation than applied faculty members. Male academic faculty members advocated considerably more participation than did the female academic faculty members. On the other hand, female applied faculty members advocated more participation than male applied faculty members. In general, the desire for faculty participation increased as the years of experience of respondents increased. The trend reversed itself, however, in respondents with 16 or more years of experience. A similar pattern was found with respect to level of education; those with advanced degrees advocated considerably more participation in decision-making than their colleagues.

Concern for the Problem

The involvement of the faculty in the administration of colleges and universities is a perennial issue. Even though there is diversity in the extent of faculty participation in university government, this practice stems from long tradition. Such is not the case with the community junior college. Blocker has pointed out that community college faculty members have had little opportunity until recently to participate in the development of educational policy.[1] The philosophy, aims, and objectives of community colleges have been formulated to a great extent by governing boards and their chief executive officers.

In recent years, community junior college faculty members have begun to seek an active role in institutional decision-making. Walsh has offered the following reasons as an explanation: (1) the faculty drive for professional status, (2) the organization of faculty associations, (3) the influences of regional accrediting associations in carrying out the recommendations of the American Association of University Professors that conditions of faculty employment be a criterion for accreditation; and (4) the emancipation of community colleges from public school control in some states where that control has limited institutional autonomy.[2]

Blocker has discussed the increased influence of the faculty upon policy-making. He believes the main reasons are a "more aggressive teaching profession, and a shift of community colleges from a subordinate position in public schools

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[1]Clyde E. Blocker, Robert H. Plummer and Richard C. Richardson, Jr., The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 145.

[2]James P. Walsh, "Encouraging Constructive Faculty-Administrator Relationships," Administering the Community College in a Changing World, S. V. Martorana and Pauline Hunter, editors (Buffalo: The State University of New York, 1966), p. 146.

to independent status."[3] The efforts of community junior college faculty members to share in policy formulation have also been given support in some states by legislation establishing master plans[4] for higher education as well as faculty senates or councils.[5]

Concern for this problem increased to the point that in late 1964 the Commission on Administration of the American Association of Junior Colleges appointed a committee to identify elements of conflict and to establish guidelines for faculty participation in institutional policymaking. The following statement expresses the spirit of their recommendations:

> Perhaps the key to success of policy formulation and implementation lies in defining the faculty as all members of the professional staff of a collegiate institution and thereby adhering to the principle that the total resources of the institution (i.e., administrators and members of the teaching faculty) relate together on a peer basis during the policy formulation process.[6]

There is evidence that the participation of faculty members in decision-making at the community junior college level is a timely and important issue. The public two-year college is a dynamic and growing part of higher education designed to serve a variety of functions. The administration of this unique form of higher education must be imaginative in order to provide for its development.

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[3]Blocker, Plummer and Richardson, op. cit., p. 147.

[4]Stanley N. Honor, "Faculty Power and Participation," Junior College Journal, XXXVI (February, 1966), p. 28.

[5]John Lombardi, "Faculty in the Administrative Process," Junior College Journal, XXXVII (November, 1966), pp. 10-11.

[6]Robert Lahti, "A Faculty Role in Policy Formulation," Junior College Journal, XXXVII (September, 1966), p. 12.

Decision-Making in Organizations

Theoreticians concerned with administration generally agree that a knowledge of the decision-making process of an organization will provide insight into its organizational structure. Students of administrative organization point out that the topics selected for consideration, the identification of alternatives, and the way in which policies are reached describe the nature of administration in an organization. The central focus is decision-making. Griffiths states that the primary "function of administration is directing and controlling the decision-making process."[7] The assumption is that the decision-making process is the core of the administration of an organization. McCamy makes this point very clearly. "The making of decisions of administration will be made systematic if we accept a framework for the analysis of decision-making."[8]

Simon amplifies the importance of the decision-making process. He points out that the decision-making with which we are concerned is not individual decision-making, but rather organizational decision-making. Simon states:

> The organization . . . takes from the individual some of his decisional autonomy, and substitutes for it an organization decision-making process. The decisions which the organization makes for the individual ordinarily (1) specify his function, that is, the general scope and nature of his duties; (2) allocate authority, that is, determine who in the organization is to have power to make further decisions for the individual; and (3) set such other limits to his choice as are needed to coordinate the activities of several individuals in the organization.[9]

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[7]Daniel E. Griffiths, "Administration as Decision-Making," Administrative Theory in Education, Andrew Halpin, editor. (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, 1958), p. 122.

[8]James L. McCamy, "Analysis of the Process of Decision-Making," Public Administration Review, VII, No. 1 (1947), p. 41.

[9]Herbert A. Simon, Administrative Behavior (New York: Macmillan Co., 1950), p. 1.

The concept of an "organization decision-making process" which Simon describes in an industrial setting is not unlike the concept of "democratic administration" as frequently described in the literature of educational administration. The modern concept of administration does not encompass the view that a centralized authority makes decisions for the group. Rather, it is based upon the premise that the administrator, through his leadership or by the authority granted him by the group, leads his faculty toward the achievement of a goal which has come to be accepted as desirable.[10] Griffiths, in Administrative Theory has urged that "the specific function of administration is to develop and regulate the decision-making process in the most effective manner possible."[11] The administrator must organize his staff and work cooperatively with them. He should encourage decision-making which is efficient and which allows for variable factors influencing the decision to be taken into account. The entire process is for the purpose of achieving the objectives of the organization.

Shared Decision-Making

> The fine art of executive decision consists in not deciding questions that are not now pertinent, in not deciding prematurely, in not making decisions that cannot be made effective, and in not making decisions that others should make.[12]

This often quoted passage from Barnard illustrates the complexity of executive decision. It also suggests that there are others who have a vital

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[10] J. R. Gibb et al., Dynamics of Participative Groups (Boulder, Colo.: University of Colorado, 1951), Chapter IV.

[11] Daniel E. Griffiths, Administrative Theory (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), pp. 71-91.

[12] Chester I. Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), p. 215.

place in the decision-making process. The involvement of subordinates in decision-making has been given much attention in the literature. Much of the recent literature supports the proposition that subordinates should share in the decision-making process. This proposition is based upon the principle that those who are affected by policy should share in its formulation.

Many writers have taken the position that participation in decision-making by staff members is appropriate and desirable. Russell Gregg[13] believes that it is especially important to have wide participation in an educational organization. He feels that there are many advantages which can accrue from such participation; among them, professionalization can be enhanced, and identification with institutional purposes and programs can be strengthened. Morphet, Reller and Johns believe "the individual finds security in a dynamic climate in which he shows responsibility for decision-making."[14] There are others who feel that "staff participation in decision-making must be justified not merely because of what it does for teachers, but because . . . it is the most effective means available to accomplish the purposes for which the schools are organized."[15]

The literature has suggested the complexity of the decision-making process. The proposition has been advanced that since decision-making is an administrative

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[13]Russell T. Gregg, "The Administrative Process," in Administrative Behavior in Education, Roald F. Campbell and Russell T. Gregg, editors (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1957), p. 278.

[14]Edgar L. Morphet, R. L. Johns, and Theodore Reller, Educational Administration: Concepts, Practices, and Issues (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959), p. 65.

[15]Roald F. Campbell, John E. Corbally, Jr., and John Ramseyer, Introduction to Educational Administration (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1958), pp. 211-212.

process involving hierarchical levels, it should be considered a group activity. It has been postulated that participation by members of an organization in the decision-making process is necessary and desirable for the participant. This premise is based upon the principle that decisions should be formulated by those who are to be affected by them.

It is this principle which constitutes the conceptual framework of this study. The fundamental question for research is not whether decisions ought to be shared, but rather which decisions ought to be shared and to what degree, as viewed by faculty members and administrators in community colleges.

The Problem

This study is an examination of the agreement and disagreement of three referent groups on the participation of community college faculty members in specific decisions. The referent groups are: instructors of technical-vocational courses (applied faculty), instructors of lower division collegiate courses (academic faculty), and administrators. Emphasis is placed upon two dimensions: existing patterns of faculty participation and desired patterns of faculty participation.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this research was tested in a pilot study conducted at Lane Community College, Eugene, Oregon, during the spring of 1967. The pilot study allowed the investigator to check the adequacy of the instrument in a number of ways. As a result of this check, the directions on the questionnaire were modified for greater clarity. In addition, the wording of some of the individual items was revised where there had been some difficulty in answering

The questionnaire used in the pilot study and the final research consisted of 44 decision statements. An analysis of the items suggested that they could logically be grouped into six categories of decisions: (1) general institutional policies, (2) curriculum and instruction, (3) professional personnel policies, (4) budgeting, (5) building and plant, and (6) student personnel policies.

The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert-type scale[16] to determine the perceptions of the respondents of existing patterns of faculty participation as well as desired patterns of faculty participation. The scale used the following alternative responses:

(1) None - No participation of any kind

(2) Minor - Being able to offer an opinion informally

(3) Moderate - Being asked for advice

(4) Considerable - Serving on formally organized committees charged with making recommendations

(5) Maximum - Being given authority to establish policy

Data Collection

The study was conducted in nine community colleges in the state of Oregon during the fall of 1967. All of the full-time professional staff members who had been employed by their respective colleges the previous year were asked to participate. Data were obtained from a questionnaire designed by the writer specifically for this research. A total of 474 questionnaires were distributed. Usable forms collected numbered 317 for a 66.9 percent return.

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[16]Rensis Likert, "A Technique for the Measurement of Attitudes," Archives of Psychology, R. S. Woodworth, editor (New York: Columbia University Press, No. 140, June 1932), pp. 5-52.

Treatment of the Data

The research design called for an analysis of whether or not there were specific differences among the categories of respondents--academic faculty, applied faculty, and administration--on their perceptions of faculty participation in decision-making. This basic analysis was used on each of the 44 decision statements contained in the questionnaire as well as on both dimensions of faculty participation.

Both dimensions of participation were measured by using the scale of five response categories. Because no assumption could be made regarding equal intervals among the five response categories, it was necessary to use a statistic appropriate for ordinal measurement. The statistic selected was the Mann-Whitney U test.[17]

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are reported in two categories: (1) views of existing patterns of faculty participation, and (2) views of desired patterns of faculty participation.

Views of Existing Patterns of Faculty Participation

1. Academic faculty members generally perceived more faculty participation in decision-making than applied faculty members.
2. Academic faculty members disagreed most with applied faculty members on decisions having to do with adopting welfare provisions, the adoption of

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[17]Sidney Siegel, Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1956).

textbooks, establishing standards of grading, and establishing cut-off scores for entrance into certain academic courses, with the academic faculty members perceiving more participation than the applied faculty members.

3. Applied faculty members perceived significantly more participation than their academic colleagues on decisions having to do with the adoption of graduation requirements and on the use of citizens' advisory committees.
4. Administrators generally perceived greater faculty participation than did academic faculty members. This was particularly true on decisions relating to budgeting, buildings, and general administrative and organizational matters.
5. Academic faculty members perceived more faculty involvement than the administrators did on decisions related specifically to instruction. This was true on the decisions pertaining to the adoption of textbooks, determining methods of instruction, and establishing standards of grading.
6. There was least disagreement between administrators and academic faculty members on professional personnel policies. The two groups generally agreed on decisions regarding the appointment of new staff members, the appointment of committee members, provisions for adopting welfare procedures, and determination of a salary schedule.
7. The data revealed more disagreement and differences of greater magnitude between administrators and applied faculty members than between academic faculty members and administrators. Administrators generally perceived considerably more faculty participation than did the applied faculty members.

8. Significant differences between administrators and applied faculty members were found in all of the decision categories except in the area of curriculum and instruction.
9. In addition to the category of curriculum and instruction, applied faculty members tended to feel more involved in decisions related to citizens' advisory committees and adult education.
10. The responses of academic faculty members did not vary noticeably by sex. Male and female academic faculty members tended to disagree with administrators on the same decisions.
11. There was considerably more disagreement between male applied faculty members and administrators than between female applied faculty members and administrators.
12. Female applied faculty members tended to feel that there was more faculty participation in decision-making than did the male applied faculty members.
13. Perceptions of faculty participation in decision-making varied by years of experience in education. Faculty members with 16 or more years of experience tended to perceive the most faculty participation; those with from four to nine years of experience perceived the least participation.
14. Faculty members with from one to three and from 10 to 15 years of experience perceived more participation than those with from four to nine years of experience, but less than those with 16 years of experience or more.
15. Faculty members with less than a bachelor's degree tended to perceive more faculty participation than those with bachelor's or advanced degree

16. The least amount of faculty participation was perceived by faculty members with advanced degrees except on some decisions relating specifically to instruction and on these items they saw more participation than their colleagues or the administrators.

Views of Desired Patterns of Faculty Participation

1. Academic faculty members advocated much greater faculty involvement in decision-making than did applied faculty members.
2. Applied faculty members did not favor more faculty participation than the academic faculty members on any item.
3. The greatest disagreement between applied and academic faculty members was in the area of professional personnel policies.
4. Academic faculty members also favored considerably more faculty participation in decision-making than administrators.
5. Administrators did not advocate greater faculty participation than the academic faculty members on any item included in the study.
6. There was more agreement between administrators and academic faculty members on desired patterns of participation in decision-making on decisions related to students and student personnel services. The greatest amount of disagreement between these groups tended to be in the area of professional personnel policies.
7. On decisions relating specifically to instruction, the academic faculty members advocated considerably more faculty participation than the administrators.
8. Applied faculty members and administrators advocated very similar patterns of faculty participation.
9. Where differences did exist on the views of desired patterns of faculty participation, administrators tended to favor more participation than applied faculty members.

10. The category of professional personnel policies accounted for half of the significant differences between administrators and applied faculty members, with administrators favoring more participation than the applied faculty members.
11. Applied faculty members were concerned most about the decisions regarding the use of citizens' advisory committees and methods of instruction; on these two items they advocated more faculty participation than did the administrators.
12. Male academic faculty members advocated considerably more faculty participation in decision-making than female academic faculty members.
13. Female academic faculty members tended to express less concern about decisions which were not directly related to curriculum or instruction.
14. Female applied faculty members tended to favor more faculty participation than administrators while male applied faculty members advocated less faculty participation than administrators.
15. Female applied faculty members advocated more faculty participation than male applied faculty members, particularly on professional personnel policies.
16. In general, the desire for faculty participation increased as the years of experience in education of the respondents increased. This trend reversed itself, however, in respondents with 16 years of experience or more.
17. Faculty members with 10 to 15 years of experience advocated the greatest degree of faculty participation in decision-making.
18. Faculty members with less than a B.A. degree advocated less faculty participation than administrators; those with a B.A. degree favored a

level of participation similar to administrators; those with an advanced degree advocated considerably more faculty participation in decision-making than administrators.

Conclusions and Implications

Recent literature in the community college field has called attention to the demands of faculty members for greater involvement in institutional policy-making. The efforts of faculty members to become more involved have met with at least moderate success. Local faculty organizations have increased in both strength and number in many states. As local associations have become better organized, community college faculty members have also become a more viable force at state levels. Some state associations have provided for faculty involvement by including a "faculty section" within the overall organization.[18] Within the past year, the National Faculty Association for Community and Junior Colleges--a branch of the National Education Association--was created, giving community college faculty members a nation-wide organization specifically concerned with the problems of community and junior colleges.

There is a substantial body of research from the social sciences documenting the advantages of having those who will be affected by policy share in its formulation. Though it is certainly true that the desire for participation in decision-making may be related to a number of other factors, there does not seem to be evidence to suggest that participation is undesirable or that it has adverse effects. On the contrary, it has been found that participation in

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[18]"Emphasis-State Associations," Junior College Journal (December, 1967 - January, 1968), p. 3.

decision-making increases motivation and productivity and decreases resistance to change.[19]

The matter of faculty participation in decision-making at the community college level is clouded by the very nature of the community college philosophy.[20] Most community colleges--and all included in this study--are "open door" institutions. This means that students of widely varying abilities are admitted and that courses are likely to cover the spectrum of remedial, occupational, and lower division transfer. A diverse curriculum means a diverse faculty. For example, of the 241 faculty members included in this study, one out of every five has less than a bachelor's degree, and nearly 42 percent do not have advanced degrees. It should not be surprising, then, that faculty members representing such a wide range of technical skills and subject areas, as well as educational levels, hold quite different views regarding faculty participation in decision-making.

While the findings from this research perhaps cannot be generalized beyond the colleges included in the study, a number of conclusions seem warranted. There is strong evidence that, in general, both academic and applied faculty members perceive less faculty participation than administrators. However, on matters associated with curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation both of these groups perceive more faculty participation than the administrators. Beyond this, distinctions need to be made between academic faculty members and applied faculty members regarding their views on participation.

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[19] V. H. Vroom, Some Personality Determinants of the Effects of Participation, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 60-61.

[20] Robert B. Carson, Keith Goldhammer, and Roland Pellegrin, Teacher Participation in the Community (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1967), p. 52.

Applied faculty members consistently report less faculty participation than academic faculty members. These differences are probably attributable to a number of factors. It is possible that academic faculty members feel a greater identification with the institutions in which they teach; it may be that committees, academic councils, presidents' cabinets, and other internal organizations which provide opportunities for participation are more available to academic faculty members. On the other hand, many applied faculty members have been associated with labor unions during their careers and perhaps have views based upon labor-management relationships. It is also possible, of course, that applied faculty members are less concerned with institutional matters and prefer to be less involved in them.

There is additional evidence that applied faculty members may have lower expectations for participation and as a result tend to be more satisfied with their present level of involvement. Nearly half of the applied faculty members in this study did not hold a B.A. degree. Because applied faculty members perceive less participation than their academic colleagues, it was anticipated that they would perceive less participation than those with a B.A. or an advanced degree. On the contrary, the data reveal that the reverse is true. Therefore, as the level of education of faculty members--academic and applied--increases, the more likely the perception of less participation.

A number of studies have indicated that men are more inclined than women to participate in political affairs.[21] This suggests that men would generally perceive greater faculty participation because of their inherent interest in such activities and that they would advocate more faculty participation than

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[21]Harmon Zeigler, The Political World of the High School Teacher (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1966), p. xiv.

women. The data from this research regarding desired patterns of faculty participation tend to confuse the issue. Among the academic faculty members, men advocated considerably more participation than the women. On the other hand, when the applied faculty members were considered, the men favored less participation than the women. Among community college faculty members it would appear that the level of education and the teaching area--academic or applied--are more critical factors than the sex of the faculty members.

This supposition is reinforced when the level of education of the faculty members is considered. In fact, it is strikingly clear that as the level of education of the faculty members increases, the desire for faculty participation in the decision-making process increases. It should not be surprising that those who hold advanced degrees appear to have more interest in decision-making and advocate greater faculty participation in these activities. They are likely to be better trained for such participation and to be more knowledgeable about the problems of an educational institution.

Research has indicated that elementary and secondary teachers do not seek a powerful role in educational decision-making.[22] It is clear, however, that for community college academic faculty members these findings do not hold. The academic faculty members in this study viewed present levels of participation as much lower than administrators, and they thought faculty involvement should be markedly higher than the administrators did. The views of administrators regarding participation tended to be conservative; that is, their views of what participation "is" and what it "ought to be" were quite similar. Disagreement between these two groups reached the .20 level of confidence on 31 of the 44

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[22]Carson et al., op. cit., p. 52.

decision statements. Whether or not these differences between the academic faculty members and administrators are of such proportions that a faculty "militancy" in the state of Oregon will emerge is, of course, a moot point. What is clear, however, is that there is great disparity between these groups on both dimensions of participation.

Earlier it was pointed out that community college faculty members are becoming better organized and are speaking out on more issues. It seems likely that this trend will continue and that it will be led primarily by academic faculty members as defined in this study. If this proves true, then new and more meaningful opportunities must be provided for faculty involvement.

The challenge to the administrator is to provide for and encourage an on-going dialogue between administrators and faculty members. Such a dialogue can be successful only in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Administrators must recognize that faculty members can contribute significantly to the decision-making process. Each institution must constantly strive to find ways to keep channels of communication open so that ideas can be heard and decisions can be influenced by those who will carry them out.

Administrators must recognize that their responsibility is to provide leadership for administrative processes. This does not mean that administrators must make all of the decisions; it does mean, however, that they should bring to bear the resources of the institution and the community on the decision-making process. It is in this context that faculty members can make valuable contributions to the institution.

It has been shown in this study that the desire of faculty members to participate in the decision-making process varies with their field of specialization, level of education, sex, and years of experience in education. Most significant of these appears to be the faculty member's field of specialization.

Therefore, administrators must seek ways to involve applied faculty members as well as academic faculty members. Attention needs to be directed to making more opportunities available to the academic faculty members, particularly in the areas of professional personnel policies and general institutional policies.

While applied faculty members do not wish to be as involved as the academic faculty members, they should be encouraged to participate in as many activities as possible. The success of the comprehensive community college depends upon the total faculty, and all segments of the faculty need to play a part in the development of an institution. Internal organizations--faculty councils, administrative councils, and committees--should be representative of as large a segment of an institution's faculty as possible. All faculty members can and should contribute in some way to the development of an institution. The task of the administrator is to make it possible for each faculty member to make his own unique contribution.